

Suez War, 1956

By David Hirst, Excerpts from his book: *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, 1977,
Futura Publications

Radio Islam

In early 1955 Ben-Gurion put war with Egypt on his agenda. This was a deliberate act of policy. 'It is today frankly admitted', according to the Paratroopers' Book, 'that if it had been up to David Ben-Gurion, the Sinai War would have taken place a year earlier' than it did." Ben-Gurion deliberately sought a showdown with the country which, as the great power of the Arab world, could bring the most decisive influence to bear for war or peace in the Middle East. He did this at a time when the young President Nasser of Egypt, for all his revolutionary idealism, was manifestly doing his best to preserve the peace. What Ben-Gurion needed was a pretext, for, as Dayan subsequently admitted, he and his friends had decided 'not to miss any politically favourable opportunity to strike at Egypt'.¹⁶ He coolly set about manufacturing one. It grew naturally out of a 'little war', ceaseless reprisal raids Qibya-style, which had a far broader purpose than the discouragement of marauding Palestinians. In his article on 'Israel's Policy of Reprisals' Moshe Brilliant explained that the rationale behind them was deeply rooted in the Zionist experience. In British Mandate days, the Jews had won great praise with their Havlaga, their 'self-restraint', but they had courted disaster. They then turned to 'gunpowder and dynamite' and discovered that, although it earned them international censure, it also 'earned them ... ultimately the coveted prize' of statehood. The Israelis had never forgotten that lesson. These bloody 'border incidents' were seldom accidental ... they were 'part of a deliberate plan to force the Arabs to the peace table'. Since 1948 'each reluctant step the Arabs took from hot war toward peace was taken when they were held by the throat'.⁵⁷

In February 1955, the Israeli army attacked Egyptian military outposts in Gaza. Thirty-nine Egyptians died. Until then this had been Israel's least troublesome frontiers. That was no accident. Just as, in earlier days, the Zionists accused the Palestinian zaims and effendis of stirring up hatred against them, so now they levelled the same charge against the Arab leaders. President Nasser, the emergent pan-Arab champion, became the obvious candidate for Israeli bogeyman. The reputation was thoroughly undeserved: the real Arab militancy was to be found, as always, among the people rather than the politicians. For six years, in the last days of Farouk and the early ones of the revolution, Egyptian rulers studiously avoided militant attitudes. Israel, it was felt, should not distract them from problems nearer home. President Nasser persuaded Western visitors, even passionately pro-Israeli ones like British politician Richard Crossman, that he really was as pacific as he sounded. 'Driving back to Cairo that night, I could not help thinking that not only Egypt, but the whole Middle East, must pray that Nasser survives the assassin's bullet. I am certain that he is a man who means what he says; and that so long as he is in power directing his middle-class revolution, Egypt will remain a factor for peace and social development.'¹⁷ "One motive for that revolution had been the hurrffiliation of Egypt's defeat in 1948; Egyptian officers, Nasser among them, attributed it 'in part to the poor and malfunctioning arms with which, owing to the corruptions of the old order, they had been sent into battle. Yet I he made no serious attempt to narrow

Israel's rapidly lengthening lead in armaments. He preferred to spend Egypt's meagre reserves of hard currency on the welfare of his backward and overpopulated country.

Not surprisingly perhaps, but disingenuously, Israeli leaders such as Bengurion and Dayan do not even mention the Gaza raid in their accounts of the period. Nasser called it a 'turning point' and all independent authorities agree with him. The raid brought him under intensified pressure not merely from the Arabs in general, but from quarters most directly involved his own army and the refugees in the Gaza Strip. As a soldier, General Burns, the Chief of Staff of the UN forces, had a sympathetic grasp of Nasser's problem with the army.

Shortly before the raid, he had visited Gaza and told the troops that there was no danger of war; that the Gaza Armistice Demarcation Line was not going to be a battle front. After that many of them had been shot in their beds. Never again could he risk telling the troops they had no attack to fear; never again could he let them believe they could relax their vigilance. It was for this reason that he could not issue and enforce strict orders against the opening of fire on the Israel patrols which marched along the demarcation line, a hundred metres or less from the Egyptian positions. These positions were held by the friends and perhaps the relatives of the men who had perished in the Israeli ambush of that bloody night.⁵⁹

There was only one way to still his commanders' clamour for arms: to furnish them. He took that decision during the confused and sleepless night of the raid, even before the last explosions had died away.⁶⁰ At first he sought Western, especially American, arms and in such small quantities that when President Eisenhower saw his shopping list he exclaimed. 'Why, this is peanuts.'⁶¹ Western intelligence was convinced that he had no intention of attacking--even if he were sure of quick and easy victory. Nor was this conviction shaken when, rebuffed by the blundering and short-sighted Americans, he negotiated the famous Czecli arms deal which marked the Soviet Union's first great break through in the struggle to undermine Western influence in the Middle East.⁶²

As for the refugees, there were more than 300,000 of them, living in poverty, idleness and a festering hatred for Israel, who shared the temptation of their brethren in Jordan. Hemmed in upon themselves by the sea, the desert and the armistice lines, they only had to look east to see the broad fields, once theirs, which the Israelis cultivated from a chain of kibbutzim guarding the heights of the area beyond. They too were 'infiltrators'; and so were the 7,000 bedouins whom the Israelis had driven across the border since 1948.⁶³ They too had crossed the lines in defiance of the official policy of the Arab country in whose territory they had found themselves. For years they had been demanding arms and the establishment of a militia. The Egyptians had done no more than make encouraging noises. The Gaza raid changed all that. For three days the Palestinians vented their indignation in riots and demonstrations which threatened the stability of as yet young and none-too-secure regime. As the sun rose over the battered town of Gaza, two hundred youths stormed Egyptian and UN installations, smashing windows, burning vehicles and trampling on flags. The next day mob violence spread to Khan Yunis and Rafah, where refugees burned down the warehouse for the UN rations off which they lived. They greeted truckloads of Egyptian soldiers with stones and shouted abuse. 'Arms,' was the universal cry, 'give us arms, we shall defend ourselves.'⁶⁴

The other decision which Nasser took in the wake of the Gaza raid was to turn the hitherto discouraged, freelance 'infiltration' into an instrument of Egyptian policy. It was in August 1955 that the world first heard of the word fedayeen --'those who sacrifice themselves'-- applied to Palestinians sent on raids into Israel. On their first raid --which began on the same day that Nasser finally committed himself to the purchase of Soviet arms-- they penetrated as far as twenty-seven miles inside enemy territory on a week-long spree of ambushes, mine-laying and assaults on persons, vehicles and buildings in which five soldiers and ten civilians died.⁶⁵ But even then, and subsequently, Nasser had only unleashed the fedayeen under pressure from his own public opinion in the wake of further provocations from Israel-provocations which he had at first met with conciliatory gestures 'such as the pull-back of front-line soldiers.'⁶⁶

The raids, and Russian weapons for Egypt, were just what Bengurion needed. The 'hosts of Amalek' were rearming in Egypt, he said;⁶⁷ the 'grave and dangerous' Czech arms deal which he had virtually forced on Nasser had been concluded for one reason and one reason only -to destroy the State of Israel and the people of Israel.'⁶⁸ The least sign of Egyptian activism, at a time when border skirmishing was costing five times as many Arab as Israelis lives,⁶⁹ was 'a vile and nefarious conspiracy ... which would encounter a Jewish force capable of ... striking any aggressor or enemy so that they shall not rise again, as in Operation Joab [against Egypt] in 1948 and the Gaza operation a month ago.'⁷⁰ In outright defiance of all the evidence he forecast that, if there were no peaceful settlement, Egypt would attack Israel within five or six months.⁷¹

The road from the 'hidden war' of border skirmishing to the open war' of Suez was, as the Paratroopers' Book later said, a short one.⁷² In October 1955, Bengurion ordered his Chief of Staff, General Dayan, to prepare for the capture of the Straits of Tiran. Shortly afterwards, in the Knesset, he denounced Egypt's violations of the armistice agreements. He named three forms which these took; fedayeen marauding certainly was a violation, but there was nothing in the armistice which specifically forbade Egypt from blocking the Straits or closing the Suez Canal to Israel shipping. 'This one-sided war will have to stop', he declared, 'for it cannot remain one-sided for ever.'⁷³ According to the faithful Dayan, this was an appeal for war within a short time; he himself urged action within a month. 'It may be, of course, that one of these days a situation will be created which makes military action possible. But this will be the fruit of chance and not the planned result of postponing it to a specific "time" and "Place".'⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Bengurion had still not overcome the resistance of the 'doves' within the government who, apprised of the war plans, decided that 'the moment was not propitious'.⁷⁵

In June 1956, after a long and bitter dispute, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, the leading 'dove', was driven from office. He was replaced by Golda Meir and, in the words of the Paratroopers' Book, 'Israeli foreign policy was adjusted to the hard and energetic line of the Minister of Defence.'⁷⁶ A month later came the final, fortuitous bonus, the event which persuaded two Western powers, Britain and France, to throw in their lot with the Israelis. 'On July 27', recorded the Paratroopers' Book, 'Nasser announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal before an enthusiastic crowd in Alexandria. Without knowing it, he thereby kicked off the Suez campaign.'⁷⁷ On 29 October, with the secret backing of Anglo-French accomplices, the Israeli army invaded Sinai and captured the whole of it, including the island of Tiran in the Gulf of Aqaba, in four days. The British and French governments issued a hypocritical ultimatum to both sides, calling on them to withdraw from the banks of the Canal, and then sent in their

own forces, ostensibly to occupy and secure the waterway for international shipping, but really in the hope of overthrowing the man who had nationalized it. If, in laying the diplomatic ground work for his all-out assault on Egypt, Bengurion had implicitly confined his aims to the ending of Egypt's armistice 'violations' and the achievement of peace, Menachim Begin and his rightwing Herut,(ex-Irgun) opposition, a hotbed of extremist pressures, had no such inhibitions. More than a year before Begin had urged on parliament a 'preventive war against the Arab states without further hesitation. By doing so we will achieve two targets: firstly the annihilation of Arab power and secondly the expansion of our territory.'" After such an over-whelming victory, however, Bengurion and his ruling Labour party lost no time, characteristically, in 'catching up' with the extremists, whose leader now said that he supported the government 'with all my heart and soul.⁷⁹ Even the most 'dovish' parties, such as the left-wing Mapam, were not far behind either. All, in greater or lesser degree, developed expansionist appetites. And when the United States called on Israel to withdraw, Bengurion was outraged. 'Up to the middle of the sixth century Jewish independence was maintained on the island of Yotvan [as the victors promptly renamed Tiran] south of the Gulf of Eilat, which was liberated yesterday by the Israeli army Israel terms' the Gaza Strip an integral part of the nation. No force, whatever it is called, was going to make Israel evacuate Sinai. And the words of Isaiah the Prophet were fulfilled.'⁸⁰

Unfortunately for Bengurion, the pretext he had so carefully manufactured was simply not good enough for the Americans. President Eisenhower quickly secured the withdrawal of the chastened British and French by withholding oil supplies from them, but it took six months to prise Israel out of all Egyptian territory. It was only by raising the threat of economic sanctions, to be applied by all members of the UN, that he managed it. 'Should a nation', he asked in a special television broadcast, 'which attacks and occupies foreign territory in the face of UN disapproval be allowed to impose conditions on its own withdrawal? If we agree that armed attack can properly achieve the purpose of the assailant, then I fear we will have turned back the clock of international order. . . .'

One condition, of sorts, Israel did get away with, the lifting of the Egyptian blockade on Israeli shipping in the Straits of Tiran, and this was to furnish the Arab-fighters with the pretext for the next 'big war'.

http://www.radioislam.org/historia/zionism/Suez_Hirst.html

Prelude to the June War

Israel's Aggression against Syria 1949-1967:

By David Paul

In 1948 the Zionists emerged from their war with the Arabs the big winners. They had seized a state which was recognized by both East and West; they had driven off about two thirds of the original population of 1.2 million; and they had conquered 77% of Palestine-- some 21% more than had been allocated to it by the UN partition plan of 1947.

However, the victory was not complete for in the northern sector parts of what had been Mandate Palestine were not occupied by Israel. These were areas along the Jordan River captured by the Syrian forces. Israel insisted that all territory it held that had been designated as belonging to the Arab state it would continue to hold. At the same time it insisted that Syria not be allowed to remain in the areas it occupied.

The UN Acting Mediator Ralph Bunche brokered the Israeli-Syrian Armistice Agreement of 20 July 1949 which required Syria to withdraw its troops. It did this in return for a pledge that sovereignty of the disputed areas would remain undetermined until a peace settlement.

This agreement created 3 DMZs totaling 66.5 square miles:

1. In the north, the smallest-- at the northeast corner of Israel's border with Syria near Baniyas Spring. Though uninhabited it was used for farming and grazing land.
2. Central DMZ-- from the southern edge of Lake Huleh to the northern tip of Lake Tiberias it is a narrow strip straddling the Jordan River with a kind of triangular shaped bulge in the middle. It had one Jewish settlement (Mishmar Ha Yarden) and four Palestinian villages (Kirad al-Baqqara, Kirad al-Ghannama, Mansura al-Khayt, and Yarda).
3. In the south, the biggest-- started about the halfway point on the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias and ran south to the tip of the lake then jutted to the east to meet with the Yarmak River at the borders between Israel, Jordan and Syria. It had one Jewish settlement (Ein Gev) and three Palestinian villages (al-Hamma, Nuqayb, and al-Samra.)

Under the armistice life was to proceed as normal, and neither side was to gain militarily from new projects. The armistice also created defensive zones surrounding the DMZs which were designed to keep the two sides from introducing any forces other than defensive. Mixed Armistice Commissions were established to ensure the full implementation of the agreements.

At first all seemed to go well, but soon Arab rage at Israeli practices became obvious. Major General Carl von Horn of Sweden, the 4th United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) Chief of Staff:

"In 1950, the Israelis had established a new kibbutz at Beit Katzir in the [southern] demilitarized zone. Like most of their kibbutzim in troubled areas, it was fortified with trenches and a double-apron barbed-wire fence from behind which the settlers sallied out to cultivate the surrounding land, digging irrigation canals to channel the water from Lake Tiberias with such vigor that before long no Arab farmer in the area was allowed into the stretch of land between the kibbutz and the lake. From here they soon extended their activities so that the inhabitants of two neighboring Arab villages, Lower and Upper Tawafiq [a Syrian village east of the southern DMZ], observed the kibbutznik tractor-drivers with alarm as they speeded up to each turn at the eastern boundaries of their fields, making the ploughs swerve out, thus slowly but surely extending their 'previous' cultivation eastward into Arab [Palestinian] land. This was of course, part of a premeditated Israeli policy to edge east through the demilitarized zone towards the old Palestine border (as shown on their maps) and to get all Arabs out of the way by fair means or foul."

"Gradually, beneath the glowering eyes of the Syrians, who held the high ground overlooking the zone, the area had become a network of Israeli canals and irrigation channels edging up against and always encroaching on Arab-owned property . . . For the ground was so fertile that every square foot was a gold mine in grain."

Major Confrontations:

21 January 1951

The World Zionist Organization's Jewish National Fund agreed to help finance a \$250 million development project which included drainage of the Huleh marshes which is an integral part of the Jordan River system and irrigation of the Negev and the Jerusalem corridor.

12 February 1951

Israel begins work on the drainage project-- it being clear that the drainage channels will impinge on Syrian territory within the central DMZ.

13 March 1951

Israel, ignoring Syria's complaint to the MAC sends earthmoving tractors into the DMZ east of the Jordan River and begins digging a drainage ditch.

24 March 1951

Israel, defying the MAC ruling that the Israeli project "constitutes a flagrant violation" of the armistice, declares for the first time that it holds sovereignty over the zone and

thus has the right to proceed. This despite the fact that the armistice agreement specifically left the issue of sovereignty to peace negotiations.

25 March 1951

Israel continues its digging. Its workers are sniped at and clashes break out between Israeli forces and Syrian troops and irregulars. No casualties are reported.

30 March 1951

Israel attacks expelling 785 Palestinians from the villages of Kirad al-Baqqara and Kirad al-Ghannama. Israel also launches an air raid inside the al-Hamma district of the southern DMZ. Two Palestinian women are killed, six civilians are wounded and around 1200 Palestinians in the central and southern DMZs were driven out. The US protested the air raid stating that it was "in no way justified."

2 May 1951

Syria, seeking to protect the Bedouin area of Shamalina from a fate similar to that of Kirad al-Baqqara and Kirad al-Ghannama, sent a force dressed as irregulars into the central DMZ at the northern tip of Lake Tiberias. After a five day fight which claimed 40 Israeli soldiers, the Syrians were repulsed. The Bedouins were driven off in the next year.

18 May 1951

The UN Security Council passes resolution 92 calling on Israel to stop draining the marshes and allow the return of the Palestinians to their homes in the DMZs. Only some 350 Palestinians were ever allowed to return. Lt. General William E. Riley of the US, then the UNTSO Chief of Staff, reported to the UN Security Council that efforts to return others were prevented by the Israelis.

General E.L.M. Burns of Canada, UNTSO Chief of Staff 1954-6: "The Israeli's claimed sovereignty over the territory covered by the DMZ . . . They then proceeded, as opportunity offered, to encroach on the specific restrictions and so eventually to free themselves, on various pretexts, of all of them."

6 June 1951

Israel stops work but then is allowed to proceed a month later when it redesigned the project so as not to trespass on the DMZ.

20 June 1951

Israel informs the UNTSO that it will no longer attend meetings of the Israel-Syria MAC as long as complaints involving the DMZs are on the agenda. In plain words, Syria must recognize Israel's sovereignty over the DMZs. Syria responded by announcing that it would not attend any meetings with an agenda that did not include DMZ items. Thus, the regular meetings of the MAC were killed.

20 August 1951

UNTSO Chief of Staff Riley reported to the Security Council that the following Israeli practices were hindering UN efforts to resolve Israeli-Syrian tensions:

1. Israel's continued occupation of the large Palestinian-owned Khuri farm in the central DMZ
2. Israeli restrictions of Palestinian movements in the central DMZ
3. Israel's refusal to allow the return of those Palestinians forcibly evicted in March
4. Israel's plans to create an Israeli-paid police force in the occupied villages of Kirad al-Baqqara and Kirad al-Ghannama
5. Israel's refusal to allow villagers to buy food in Syria
6. Israel's refusal to allow farmers to return to the Khuri farm to water the orange groves
7. Restrictions placed by Israel on the movements of UN observers

September 1953

Israel launches on a crash basis a water diversion project in the central DMZ. Israel claims it is just a small diversion to a hydroelectric station. UN observers put the lie to that noting that it would in fact control the Jordan River. In effect it would kill Eisenhower's scheme to bring peace to the area by a sharing of the region's water resources. Eventually Israeli did admit that the real plan was to divert enough water to help irrigate the coastal Sharon Plain and then the Negev desert.

18 September 1953

US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles informs Israel that if it did not stop the diversion project the US would cancel the \$26 million aid pending. Israel ignored the threat.

23 September 1953

Major General Bemnike of Denmark, UNTSO Chief of Staff, called on Israel to stop work on the diversion project. His report to the Secretary-General noted that the Israeli project was already denying water to two Palestinian mills, causing them to cease work, and drying up some Palestinian farmland. He also went on to describe in some detail the military advantages Israel would gain should she control the Jordan as she planned. Israel's response was to increase work.

20 October 1953

Dulles announces publicly the US decision to withhold aid to Israel.

27 October 1953

Israel announces that it is suspending work.

28 October 1953

Eisenhower announces resumption of US aid to Israel for a six month period. Through 1956 Eisenhower tied US aid to Israeli behavior. The Eisenhower attempt to bring peace to the area through water sharing came to naught.

11 December 1955

Israel sends 2 paratroop battalions, backed by artillery and mortar batteries, under the command of Ariel Sharon, against Syrian posts at Butayha farm and the Syrian village of Kursi outside of the DMZ, near the northeast shore of Lake Tiberias. Casualties: 56 Syrians including 3 women killed, 9 wounded, 30 taken prisoner; 6 Israelis killed, and 14 wounded.

The US expressed "shock" at the raid and the UN Security Council resolution unanimously condemned Israel for its "flagrant violation" of the armistice agreement.

The object of the attack, according to the Israeli historian Benny Morris, was to provoke Egypt into honoring its 20 October mutual defense pact with Syria by attacking Israel. Thereby this would ignite the war Israel sought with Egypt. The non-belligerent response by Egypt forced Israel to wait almost a year to attack Egypt.

Israel completed the expulsion of those Palestinians still living in the DMZ during the "Suez Crisis" of 1956. The DMZs now under Israeli control the point of attack became control of the Jordan River. Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria attempted diversion projects to gain a share of the Jordan's waters. This led to Israeli attacks all along the frontiers of the DMZs and even inside Syria itself. Infiltration and even acts of terror remained minor until 1965, when Fateh guerrillas began to operate.

16 March 1962

Israel's long term policy had been for some time the establishment of exclusive Israeli control over Lake Tiberias-- despite several treaties that gave Syrian fishing and navigation rights on the lake as well as grazing, water and cultivation rights and the right to cross the frontier freely. Israel did its utmost to prevent Syrian and Palestinian use of the lake. Several shooting incidents between Syrian troops on shore and Israeli armed patrol boats had occurred. On the 16th Israel raided the village of Nuqayb in the central DMZ. At least 30 Syrians and 5 Israelis were killed. The UN "deplored" the fighting between the two sides and found Israel in "flagrant violation" of the armistice agreement.

Meanwhile, since late 1956 Israel had resumed work on its National Water Carrier. Avoiding the DMZs (and thus US objections) Israel diverted water directly from Lake Tiberias and sent it 155 miles south to irrigate the northern part of the Negev desert. Israel did this without consulting the riparian states of Syria and Jordan which had a right to be consulted on the use of joint waters. Israel ignored all Arab complaints and finished the project on 28 May 1964.

The headwaters of the Jordan became the focus of Israeli attacks at the end of 1964. Israel claimed the River Dan, a reservoir, and all the springs in the area as its own. Syria claimed several of the springs and part of the reservoir and complained that Israel had built a patrol road on Syrian territory. On 13 November Syria fired on an Israeli patrol using the road. Israel sent jets to napalm, strafe and rocket Syrian positions in the DMZ and as far as 6 miles inside Syria, killing at least 7 Syrians and wounding around 26. Israel lost 3 killed and 9 wounded.

As retaliation for Israel's theft of the waters of Lake Tiberias the Arabs vowed to drain off water from two Jordan tributaries-- the Hasbani in Lebanon and the Baniyas in Syria. The idea was to funnel the water through Syrian and Jordanian territory to south of Lake Tiberias. Lebanon and Syria began digging in February 1964 but the Israelis destroyed their bulldozers with artillery fire.

Syria tried to resume work the summer of 1966 by moving its heavy earthmoving equipment into the area north of the Israeli frontier around the Baniyas River. On 14 July Israeli warplanes flying 8 miles inside Syrian territory destroyed the engineering works and the earthmoving equipment, thus killing the Syrian project.

In this era of ever increasing acts of violence and total distrust the Israelis struck out with full force against their neighbors on 5 June 1967. With victory over Egypt and Jordan quickly accomplished Israel broke the cease fire then in effect and on June 9 seized the Golan Heights.

Around a quarter of the 139,000 Syrians living in the area fled during the war. According to the historian Tabitha Petran: "In the next six months Israel expelled another 95,000 people by demolishing villages, cutting off water and food supplies, and by threats reinforced by torture and execution of those who refused to leave. Expellees were compelled to leave behind everything they owned-- shops full of goods, sheep and goats, clothes and household possessions, as well as lands, homes vineyards and apple trees."

UNTSO Chief of Staff von Horn on the threat posed by Syrian artillery on the Golan Heights: "It is unlikely that these would ever had come into action had it not been for Israeli provocation."

As the American historian Donald Neff notes: "The threat posed to Israel by Syrian heavy artillery on the Golan before 1967 does not appear to have the prominence at the time that it subsequently acquired in Israeli pronouncements. None of the UNTSO chiefs of staff in their memoirs considered as especially menacing the Golan gun emplacements. In fact, the heights themselves are seldom mentioned." And, "... not a single Israeli civilian is reported to have been killed by Syrian artillery in the six months before the 1967 war, a period of intense skirmishes between the two sides."

Moshe Dayan, Minister of Defense at the time, had this to say about the shelling from the Golan by Syria: "Eighty percent of the incidents worked like this: We would send tractors to plow in an area of little use, in a demilitarized zone, knowing ahead of time that the Syrians would shoot. If they didn't start shooting, we would tell the tractors to advance until the Syrians would get aggravated and start shooting. We used artillery and

later the air force became involved." He went on to say that this was the policy for years and that all northern military commanders including Rabin used this tactic.

Based on:

Neff, Donald. "Israel-Syria: Conflict at the Jordan River, 1949-1967" *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 23, no. 4 (Summer 1994), pp. 26-40

<http://www.radioislam.org/historia/zionism/1967-prelude.html>

The War of Aggression 1967

Admissions from Zionist Leaders

Radio Islam

In the early hours of June 5, 1967, Israel launched a war of aggression against Egypt, Jordan and Syria and occupied the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. On the admission of many Israeli leaders, this war was the result of a long-planned, calculated aggression. It was undertaken in order to expand Israel's occupation of Arab territories and not (as falsely claimed by Israeli apologists) as a pre-emptive strike to avoid annihilation.

The following admissions from Israeli leaders prove their conspiracy and their crime against peace:

1. **Menachem Begin**, Minister without Portfolio:

"In June 1967, we had a choice. The Egyptian Army concentrations in the Sinai approaches do not prove that Nasser was really about to attack us. We must be honest with ourselves. We decided to attack him."

(New York Times, August 21, 1982)

2. **General Yitzhak Rabin**, Chief of Staff, Israeli Defence Forces:

"I do not believe that Nasser wanted war. The two divisions which he sent into Sinai on May 14 would not have been enough to unleash an offensive against Israel. He knew it and we knew it."

(Le Monde, February 28, 1968)

3. **General Mattitiah Peled**, Chief Quartermaster-General's Branch, Israeli Defence Forces, General Staff:

"All those stories about the huge danger we were facing because of our small territorial size, an argument expounded once the war was over, had never been considered our calculations prior to the unleashing of hostilities. While we proceeded towards the full mobilization of our forces, no person in his right mind could believe that all this force was necessary to our defence against the Egyptian threat. To pretend that the Egyptian forces concentrated on our borders were capable of threatening Israel's existence does not only insult the intelligence of any person capable of analyzing this kind of situation,

but is primarily an insult to the Israeli army."
(*Le Monde*, June 3, 1972)

4. General Ezer Weizman, Chief of Operations, Israeli Defence Forces, General Staff:

"There was never a danger of extermination. This hypothesis had never been considered in any serious meeting."
(*Ha' aretz*, March 29, 1972)

5. General Yeshayahu Gavish, Commanding General Southern Command:

"The danger of Israel's extermination was hardly present before the Six-day war."
(Alfred M. Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1978, p. 558)

6. General Mordechai Hod, Commanding General, Israeli Air Force:

"Sixteen years planning had gone into those initial eighty minutes. We lived with the plan, we slept on the plan, we ate the plan. Constantly we perfected it."
(New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1978, pp. 558-559)

7. General Haim Barlev, Chief of General Staff Branch, Israeli Defence Forces:

"We were not threatened with genocide on the eve of the six-day war, and we had never thought of such a possibility."
(*Ma' ariv*, April 4, 1972)

8. General Chaim Herzog, Commanding General and first Military Governor, Israeli Occupied West Bank:

"There was no danger of annihilation. Israeli headquarters never believed in this danger."
(*Ma' ariv*, April 4, 1972)

9. Mordechai Bentov, Minister of Housing:

"The entire story of the danger of extermination was invented in every detail, and exaggerated *a posteriori* to justify the annexation of new Arab territory."
(*Al-Hamishmar*, April 14, 1971)

10. Yigal Allon, Minister of Labor and Member of Prime Minister Eshkol's Military Advisory Committee:

"Begin and I want Jerusalem."

(Eitan Haber, *Menahem Begin: The Legend and the Man*, New York: Delacorte Press, 1978 , p. 271)

11. General Meir Amit, the former head of Military Intelligence who was head of Mossad in 1967:

"There is going to be a war. Our army is now fully mobilized. But we cannot remain in that condition for long. Because we have a civilian army our economy is shuddering to a stop. We don't have the manpower right now even to bring in the crops. Sugar beets are rotting in the earth. We have to make quick decisions... If we can get the first blow in our casualties will be comparatively light..."

(Dennis Eisenberg, Uri Dan and Eli Landau, *The Mossad: Israel's Secret Intelligence Service*, New York: New American Library, 1978 , pp. 160-161.)

<http://www.radioislam.org/islam/english/toread/sixday.htm>